

17-cr-138

May 7, 2020

FILED
RICHARD W. NAGEL
CLERK OF COURT

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U.S. DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DIST. OHIO
EAST DIV. COLUMBUS

Honorable James L. Graham
Joseph P. Kinneary US Courthouse
85 Marconi Boulevard, Room 546
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Bernd D. Appleby (76965-061)

Your honor,

I am writing to you regarding the Lompoc Prison and their management (or lack of) of the COVID-19 epidemic which is running rampant throughout the prison and its satellite camps.

Contrary to BoP assurances that they are containing this disease are incorrect and misleading. In fact, the Prison has quit reporting any cases at all to the local Santa Barbara County Public Department.

On May 6, 2020, Jimmie Lee Houston, a camper in the South Camp where my brother is held, died.

My brother reported to me that Medical Staff who take daily temperatures have informed inmates that the disease is out-of-control and that 80% of the 300 inmates at the Low Facility have tested positive (Dorms J + K). The infected inmates are then moved to H Unit and housed in 5x8 cells.

I have included some relevant articles that I hope will apprise you of the seriousness of the out-of-control spread of the disease at Lompoc and my concern at the lack of care and health of all inmates at Lompoc, but of course, in particular, my brother.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Margaret Christophersen

Margaret Christophersen



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Coronavirus Crisis

County COVID-19 Cases Soar by 70, but Most Are Lompoc Federal Prison Inmates

Testing Begins in Santa Barbara on Thursday at Earl Warren Showgrounds

By Joshua
Molina,
Noozhawk Staff
Writer |
@JECMolina |
UPDATED 7:44

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Santa Barbara County soared by 70 on Wednesday — but 65 of those are at the Lompoc Federal Penitentiary.

Later Wednesday, Lompoc prison officials announced that inmate Jimmie Lee Houston, 75, had been

May 6, 2020
6:34 p.m.

COVID-19, making him the county's 10th person to die due to COVID and the second fatality for the federal facility.

The large number of new cases emerged as prison officials continued fighting to contain the virus at the prison, which has emerged as a national prison epicenter for COVID-19.

Of the county's 613 total cases, 172 are inmates at the prison, where the spike in cases is a result of mass testing, said Dr. Van Do-Reynoso, county public health director.



"Today we see a significant rise in the number of confirmed cases, primarily due to the mass testing that began at the federal prison earlier this week," Do-Reynoso.

The prison is testing all of its inmates in an attempt to slow the transmission.

The goal is to identify asymptomatic or presymptomatic inmates who may be carrying the virus and spreading it unknowingly. The patients who test positive are separated from those who do not.

Van Do-Reynoso said a majority of the inmates who have tested positive are showing mild or no symptoms, but a few are experiencing acute health care problems.

Of the remaining 441 non-inmate cases in the county, 24 are being treated at local hospitals, including 10 in intensive care units, while 43 are recovering at home,

which means the number of active cases continues on a downward trend.

There are 355 people who have fully recovered, and information is pending on 11 patients.

Some Lompoc prison inmates are being treated at local hospitals, but they are not included in the county's total, and the Public Health Department is not releasing those numbers at the request of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, Do-Reynoso told Noozhawk.

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The Lompoc prison's outbreak comes at a time when the state is conducting increased testing in the county.

In Santa Maria, 116 people were tested on Monday and the results are pending. Van Do-Reynoso said she expects an increase in the number of people who test positive because more people are being tested.

A testing site will open at Earl Warren Showgrounds on Thursday, and in Lompoc on Friday.

"Through increased testing, local communities can box in the spread of the virus, by quickly identifying asymptomatic people who are infected with the virus," Do-Reynoso said. "We encourage our community to take advantage of this local opportunity to get tested."

Screening and appointments can be made between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. by visiting <https://lhi.care/covidtesting> or by calling 888.634.1123. The test costs will be billed to health insurance, or will be free.

The county on Tuesday announced a ninth person who died, a Santa Barbara resident in their 40s, with underlying health conditions. No additional details were provided about that case.

Houston, who was incarcerated at the Lompoc Satellite Prison Camp, had reported feeling ill on April 8, and was transported to a local hospital where he tested positive for COVID-19, BOP representatives said.

Three days later, his condition declined and he was placed on a ventilator but died sometime Wednesday at an unspecified hospital. He also had underlying health conditions.

Houston was sentenced in the District of Alaska to 10 years in federal prison for possessing a controlled substance with intent to distribute, possessing a firearm with obliterated serial number, and a criminal forfeiture allegation.

He had been in custody at the Lompoc Federal Correctional Complex since Feb. 16, 2018, BOP officials said.

The Satellite Prison Camp is a minimum-security facility with 502 males inmates adjacent to the U.S. Penitentiary, Lompoc. The Lompoc Federal Correctional Complex also includes the Federal Correctional Institution, with approximately 2,700 inmates at all the facilities there.

Noozhawk North County editor Janene Scully contributed to this report.

— *Noozhawk staff writer Joshua Molina can be reached at jmolina@noozhawk.com. Follow Noozhawk on Twitter: @noozhawk, @NoozhawkNews and @NoozhawkBiz. Connect with Noozhawk on Facebook.*

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Breaking News | Lompoc Prison Reports Second COVID-19 Death

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65 More COVID-19 Cases Confirmed at Lompoc Prison

Part of the Complex Is Now Testing 100 Percent of
Inmates



The Lompoc prison recently finished construction on a new hospital unit with double-occupancy rooms to care for its growing number of sick inmates. | Credit: Bureau of Prisons

By **Tyler Hayden**

Wed May 06, 2020 | 7:38pm

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases at the federal prison complex in Lompoc jumped by 65 today as the penitentiary started the process of testing 100 percent of inmates in one particularly hard-hit area of the property. There are now 172 confirmed cases among staff and inmates throughout the grounds, and that figure is expected to rise sharply in the coming days as testing continues.

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The known prison cases account for more than a quarter of all Santa Barbara County infections, which has now reached 613. The number of prison cases, combined with community cases in the cities of Santa Maria and Lompoc, where the majority of staff live, account for more than two-thirds of the county's total.

The Bureau of Prisons said Tuesday it would be testing all inmates at Federal Correctional Institution Lompoc (FCI Lompoc), the low-security component of the complex that houses 1,186 male offenders. The other half of the complex is United States Penitentiary Lompoc (USP Lompoc), with 1,530 inmates. The bureau notably did not say mass testing was taking place there.

"This robust testing will assist FCI Lompoc in slowing transmission by identifying those asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic individuals who may be carrying the virus unknowingly and separating them from those who test negative, thus preventing these COVID-positive inmates from transmitting the virus to others," the agency said in a prepared statement.

"Social distancing inside a prison is difficult to achieve, especially with an open dormitory style setting," the statement continued. "FCI Lompoc tackled this challenge by placing over 250 beds in alternative housing to create space and serve as quarantine locations. On the prison grounds, multiple temperature-controlled field living quarters are being utilized for housing. Additionally, the gymnasium, chapel, visiting room, and the decommissioned prison industry factory have been repurposed to accommodate inmate housing."

The prison also just completed construction on a hospital unit within a decommissioned factory on the property. It contains 20 acute-care beds, a pharmacy, biohazard room, and other medical resources. Bureau of Prison (BOP) officials, citing security concerns, have declined to state how many staff and inmates are currently being treated at area hospitals.

Inmates in outside hospitals are guarded 24 hours a day by two officers on eight-hour shifts. Due to outbreak-related staffing shortages at the Lompoc complex, the BOP has reportedly been flying in guards from one or more of its 121 other penitentiaries to fill the empty shifts.

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Thu May 07, 2020 | 19:45pm

<https://www.independent.com/2020/05/06/65-more-covid-19-cases-confirmed-at-lompoc-prisor>



Breaking News | Lompoc Prison Reports Second COVID-19 Death



Lompoc Prison Reports Second COVID-19 Death

**Jimmie Lee Houston, 75, Was Serving 10-Year
Sentence**



Lompoc Prison | Credit: courtesy

By **Tyler Hayden**

Thu May 07, 2020 | 9:29am

The federal prison complex in Lompoc reported its second COVID-19 death Thursday. Jimmie Lee Houston, 75, tested positive for the virus on April 8 and, after his health quickly declined, was placed on a ventilator on April 11. He died May 6 at an undisclosed hospital in Santa Barbara County. Houston had long-term, preexisting medical conditions, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) said in a news release.

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Houston had been in custody in Lompoc since February 2018. He'd been sentenced in Alaska to 10 years behind bars on drug and gun charges. A total of 42 BOP inmates have now died from COVID-19 while in custody.

The Lompoc prison complex recently completed construction on a 20-bed hospital unit to ease the growing strain on regional health centers as the number of infected inmates continues to rise. Santa Barbara officials reported Wednesday that 172 inmates and staff have now tested positive for the virus. Inmates and their families continue to criticize the BOP and Lompoc prison authorities for not acting quickly enough to contain the outbreak, which remains one of the worst in the country.

At the Santa Barbara Independent, our staff is working around the clock to cover every aspect of this crisis — sorting truth from rumor. Our reporters and editors are asking the tough questions of our public health officials and spreading the word about how we can all help one another. The community needs us — now more than ever — and we need you in order to keep doing the important work we do. Support the Independent by making a direct contribution or with a subscription to Indy+.

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